

Message Text

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61

ACTION EUR-25

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INFO AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES

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TAGS: PFOR, PO

SUBJECT: NEW EDITORIAL ON AZORES NEGOTIATIONS

REF: LISBON 219

SUMMARY: EDITORIAL IN GOVERNMENT-BACKED NEWSPAPER
REITERATES US GAINS AND PORTUGUESE LOSSES AS RESULT USE OF
LAJES IN MIDEAST WAR. CALLING FOR REALISTIC APPRAISAL,
EDITORIAL SAYS MORE THAN JUST SUBSTANTIAL PAYMENT
IS NECESSARY. IN WHAT MAY BE VEILED REFERENCE TO PORTUGUESE
AFRICAN PROBLEMS, EDITORIAL IMPLIES THAT GOP LOOKS TO US TO
GUARANTEE IT AGAINST UNDEFINED DIFFICULTIES.
END SUMMARY

1. LEADING LISBON DAILY, DIARIO DE NOTICIAS, CARRIED
JAN. 30 ANOTHER FRONT PAGE EDITORIAL ON AZORES BASE
NEGOTIATIONS. ARTICLE REFERRED TO JAN. 17 EDITORIAL (REFTEL)
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AND REITERATED THAT US AND GOP HAVE UNTIL AUGUST 1974

TO COME TO TERMS AND THAT THEREFORE PRESENT SITUATION
IS NEITHER URGENT NOR CRITICAL.

2. RECALLING OPENING OF NEGOTIATIONS LAST AUTUMN
BETWEEN UNDER SECRETARY PORTER AND GOP AMBASSADOR
THEMIDO, EDITORIAL SAID TALKS WERE SUSPENDED BECAUSE OF US
PREOCCUPATION WITH MIDEAST WAR. (COMMENT: STRICTLY
SPEAKING, THIS NOT TRUE, AS TALKS BEGAN ONLY IN MID-
OCTOBER.) EDITORIAL EMPHASIZED GREAT IMPORTANCE OF
AZORES BASE TO ISRAEL RESUPPLY OPERATION, SAYING USE OF
LAJES WAS DECISIVE IN US EFFORT TO RE-ESTABLISH MIDEAST
BALANCE.

3. SAYING USE OF AZORES OVER THREE DECADES HAS BENEFIT-
TED ONLY US, ARTICLE SAID MIDEAST WAR CLEARLY BROUGHT
OUT ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES FOR BOTH PARTIES TO
AGREEMENT. USE OF LAJES ALLOWED US TO ASSIST ISRAEL
AND THUS AVOID A TERRIBLE REVERSE IN INTERNATIONAL CHESS-
GAME. BUT PORTUGAL, WHICH HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH THE
CONFLICT, GAINED ONLY THE ENMITY OF ARAB OIL PRODUCERS
AND RESULTANT OIL BOYCOTT.

4. ADDRESSING ISSUE OF PRESENT NEGOTIATIONS, ARTICLE SAID
PORTUGAL NEITHER REPUDIATES ITS INTERNATIONAL RESPONSI-
BILITIES NOR RENOUNCES ITS CLOSE TIES TO US WHICH IT
GREATLY PRIZES. NONETHELESS, BASE HAS BEEN PROVIDED AT
NO COST FOR A QUARTER CENTURY AND TIME HAS COME TO
FACE ISSUE SQUARELY "IN THE COLD LIGHT OF REALITY";
REALITY DICTATES THAT GOP CANNOT BE SATISFIED WITH
SUBSTANTIAL PAYMENTS ALONE, ALTHOUGH SUCH PAYMENTS ARE
PORTUGAL'S DUE. ADDITIONALLY, PORTUGAL MUST "TAKE
PRECAUTIONS AGAINST SITUATIONS WHICH MIGHT INVOLVE IT
IN UNDESIRABLE EMERGENCIES AND THEIR INEVITABLE CONSEQUENCES."

5. ARTICLE CONCLUDES WITH EXPRESSION OF CONFIDENCE THAT
PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT WILL HAVE NECESSARY FIRMNESS TO FIND
PROPER BALANCE BETWEEN THE INTERESTS AT STAKE AND THE
VALUES WHICH IT IS IMPORTANT TO SAFEGUARD, AND ADDS THAT
NATION IS CONFIDENT, BEHIND GOVERNMENT, AND AWARE OF THE
IMPORTANCE AND DELICACY OF THE DECISIONS TO BE MADE.
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6. COMMENT: ASIDE FROM FACT CENSORSHIP WOULD NOT
PERMIT PUBLICATION ARTICLE ON AZORES WHICH DID NOT HAVE
GOP APPROVAL, GOP IS MAJORITY OWNER OF DIARIO DE NOTICIAS.
THUS ALL INDICATIONS ARE THIS ARTICLE WAS GOP-DRAFTED AND
REPRESENTS CONTINUATION OF GOP EFFORTS AT PUBLIC
NEGOTIATION, ALONG SAME LINES AS REFTTEL. THIS
EDITORIAL, HOWEVER, ADDS NEW INGREDIENT IN SAYING

THAT SOMETHING MORE THAN SUBSTANTIAL PAYMENT WILL BE
REQUIRED. WHILE VAGUE, AND PERHAPS PURPOSELY SO,
THERE IS A HINT THAT THE "SITUATIONS" AGAINST
WHICH GOP MUST TAKE PRECAUTIONS MIGHT DEVELOP IN
PORTUGUESE AFRICA, AND THE IMPLICATION IS CLEAR THAT
GOP WILL LOOK TO US TO GUARANTEE IT AGAINST CONSEQUENCES
WHICH MIGHT FLOW FROM SUCH SITUATIONS. TEXT POUCHED
TO EUR/IB.
SCOTT

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